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ANNUAL REPORT

OF

MEDICAL OFFICER of HEALTH

TO THE

RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL

OF TOWCESTER.

1925.



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TOWCESTER,

April 30th, 1926.



To The Towcester Rural District Council.

GENTLEMEN,

I beg to submit my Twenty-fourth Annual Report as Medical Officer of Health for your district. In an "Ordinary" Report the Ministry of Health does not require notice to be taken of conditions which do not change from year to year. This, however, is a "Survey" Report, and contains details which though probably well known to members of the Council are not known to some outside it, who are nevertheless interested.

NATURAL AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS OF THE AREA.

The area of the district is 42456 acres.

The Population at the census of 1921 was 9921, a decrease of 561 in the previous decade. The Registrar General estimates the population for 1925 at 9959, which I consider an over-estimate. Two influences which incline me to this conclusion are: the destruction by fire of a large boot factory which was never rebuilt, and the abandonment of iron ore quarrying. I think 9900 would be a nearer estimate for 1925.

All parishes of the district have diminished according to the last census except :—Blakesley *increase* of (9.) Gayton (8) Plumpton (9). Towcester (34). Whittlebury (21). Woodend (1) The greatest decadences were in Silverstone (*decrease* of 119). and Greens Norton (110).

The Towcester Poor-law Union comprises 23 Parishes embracing an area of 62 square miles, and is about equally divided between arable and pasture land.

The number of inhabited houses in 1921 was 2728.

The number of families or separate occupiers in 1921 was 2624.

The rateable value is £78931, and the sum represented by a penny rate is £198.

The district is an agricultural one essentially and the people are mostly occupied on the land. The Grand Junction Canal which runs through part of the area finds work for a few. Engineering Works at Towcester, where Agricultural Machines are made, employ a considerable number of men. There is a Bacon Factory at Blisworth. Pillow Lace, for the making of which the neighbourhood was once famous, is now a decayed industry, and where a "pillow" in the cottage was the rule, it is now the exception. There are no offensive trades or occupations carried on that have any pernicious influence on the Public Health.

The Town of Towcester is a thoroughfare on the road from London to Holyhead, and to that circumstance owes some of its prosperity on account of the large number of private motorists who stop on their way through for petrol and refreshments. Motor lorries are not so popular—they damage roads towards the upkeep of which they contribute nothing, whilst at night the noise and vibration caused by the passage of these heavy vehicles constitute a menace to the health of those unfortunates living in houses abutting on the main road. The imposition of a speed limit on *all* Motor Vehicular traffic through the town, would, I believe, be welcomed by the inhabitants and lessen the number of accidents that occur every year.

Vital Statistics.

BIRTHS. The number of births was 150 (Males 72, Females 78) of which 7 were illegitimate. The Birth Rate is 15·06 per 1000 population, and that for England and Wales 18·3 which is the lowest recorded with the exception of 1917 and 1918. The Towcester rate is the lowest on record.

DEATHS AT ALL AGES. In number 123 (Males 55, Females 68.) The Death Rate is 12·35 which is fairly low, though higher than in 1924, and fractionally higher than E. & W. with a rate of 12·2, the same as in 1924.

DEATHS UNDER 1 YEAR OF AGE. There were 8 deaths of Infants (Males 4, Females 4.) The Death Rate per 1000 births is 53·33. That for E. & W. is 75, which is also the same as in 1924.

Of the total deaths 62 were over 70 years of age, and of these 47 were over 75, 26 over 80, and 4 over 90. The figures include 9 persons who died in the Union Workhouse. I may here mention an unusual happening, viz : that no death was registered between August 12th and September 19th, 1925, 5 weeks and 3 days. A record that will probably stand for a long time.

The Causes of Death were—

	M.	F.
Measles		1
Respiratory Tuberculosis ...	3	2
Cancer	7	8
Rheumatic Fever	3	
Diabetes	1	1
Cerebral Hæmorrhage ...	2	3
Heart Disease	9	16
Arterio-Sclerosis		1
Bronchitis	4	7
Pneumonia (all forms) ...	1	2
Other Respiratory Diseases ...	1	1
Ulcer of Stomach or Duodenum	1	1
Appendicitis and Typhlitis ...	1	1
Acute and Chronic Nephritis ...	2	
Congenital Debility {	2	3
Premature Birth }		
Suicide		1
Other Deaths from Violence ...	4	
Other defined Diseases ...	13	19
Causes ill-defined or unknown	1	1
	<hr/> 55	<hr/> 68

There is nothing in the above list for comment, or comparison with previous similar tables.

The amount of Poor Law relief during the year was £2994-10-6.

The General Hospital and the Tuberculosis Dispensary at Northampton are easily accessible and many people of the poorer classes receive attention at these Institutions.

Except small epidemics of Childrens ailments such as Whooping Cough, Measles, and Mumps there was no noteworthy outbreak of infectious disease, and there were no conditions of occupation or environment which had any prejudicial effect on health.

GENERAL PROVISION OF HEALTH SERVICES IN THE AREA.

There is no Institution for Tuberculosis in the area, but the Sanatorium at Rushden receives many of the cases of Pulmonary Tuberculosis occurring in the district. There is neither Maternity, Childrens', nor Fever Hospital. For Small Pox the Authority have two large huts, which I am thankful to say have never been occupied. They were completed at the end of 1923, and are in an ideal position on high land a mile by road North East of Towcester and about 433 yards as the crow flies from the nearest dwelling house, and 233 yards from the highway. There is accommodation for 4 Males and 4 Females; each Ward being $19\frac{1}{2}$ by $16\frac{1}{2}$ feet, centrally heated, and having a cubic space of 3133 feet. Northampton General Hospital has already been alluded to as being available.

There is no institutional provision for unmarried Mothers, Illegitimate infants, nor homeless Children.

There is no Ambulance arrangement for infectious cases, and as there is no agreement with any Authority to receive such, it is not necessary. For Accidents the Police have a wheeled litter for first aid. A Motor Ambulance from Northampton is frequently hired to convey serious cases of illness to Hospital, but accidents are generally removed by Motor Car to avoid lose of time.

There is a Child Welfare Centre at Towcester which is supervised by the County Association and staffed by the local association, but no Day Nurseries, School Clinics, Tuberculosis Dispensaries nor Venereal Centre in any part of the district.

The Sanitary Inspector is a whole-time Officer who holds the "Food Certificate." The M.O.H. is part-time. The salaries of both are contributed to by Exchequer Grants.

PROFESSIONAL NURSING IN THE HOME. General Nursing is done in the area by local associations which are affiliated to the Northampton Nursing Association. The Guardians are subscribers.

There is no nursing provision for infectious diseases.

MIDWIVES are under the jurisdiction of the Northampton Nursing Association. The number practising in the district is 9, and they conducted 66 per cent of the Births.

There are no Local Acts.

SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE AREA.

WATER. Where supplied by the Council the supply, taken generally, is constant, and good in quantity and quality. There was, however, a complaint during the year of intermission in the flow to part of Towcester. The result of this was a visit by an Inspector from the Ministry of Health, who suggested a duplication of the pumping plant, and a scheme is in preparation to effect this. 575 houses in Towcester have the public supply and about 96 per cent of these have it laid on. Houses not so supplied have wells, and some living at the south end of the town get their water from a constantly running spring.

Village supplies are as follows:—

Abthorpe	supplied by standpipes.		
Blakesley	„	„	„ and laid on to 15 houses.
Gayton	„	„	„
Greens Norton	„	„	„ and partly laid on.
Cold Higham, part	„	„	„ and the rest by wells.
Litchboro'	„	„	„
Maidford	„	„	„
Stoke Bruerne	„	„	„

These supplies are obtained from Springs, and no instance of contamination is known. No action therefore was necessary.

Rivers and Streams :—No pollution.

DRAINAGE & SEWERAGE. There was one complaint of contamination of a ditch carrying off surface water at Blisworth, where the disposal of sewage has been giving trouble. A sewerage scheme is now in hand. Other parts of the district are satisfactory. Sewage is removed from Towcester by iron pipes to the Sewage Farms two miles away, and where there

are pit or pail privies the contents are cleared when necessary and carted to the land, and this is principally the method adopted in the villages.

CLOSET ACCOMMODATION. The number of closets I cannot ascertain. Privies are decreasing and are done away with whenever possible and pails substituted, these in their turn being superseded by water closets where there is a sewage disposal system. During the year there were 7 conversions of privies to pails, 3 pails to water, and 1 privy to water.

SCAVENGING. House refuse is removed once a week in Towcester by public scavenger. In other parts of the district it is disposed of by occupiers. Privies, ashpits, and cesspools are also dealt with by occupiers.

SANITARY INSPECTION OF THE AREA. The Sanitary Inspector reports that 1157 visits and inspections were made during the year. 28 notices were served, 19 Statutory, 9 Informal, and that the result of these "services" was that the defects were in all cases remedied. Other details in this connection will be found in the synopsis of the Sanitary Inspector's work which is appended.

PREMISES AND OCCUPATIONS WHICH CAN BE CONTROLLED BY BYE-LAWS OR REGULATIONS. There is no common lodging house.

OTHER SANITARY CONDITIONS REQUIRING NOTICE. None.

SCHOOLS. There is no systematic inspection of schools as there is a School Medical Officer. For preventing the spread of infectious disease the closure of a school is obviated as far as possible by the exclusion of particular scholars.

Housing.

THE General Housing Conditions in the Area are good.

There is neither shortage nor excess of houses.

The Population of the district according to the 1921 census shewed a decrease of 561 since the previous census in 1911, and those who know the neighbourhood are of opinion that the number is gradually getting smaller.

OVERCROWDING. There was no case during the year.

FITNESS OF HOUSES. The General standard of housing is good. Defects generally found are leaky roofs and spouts, and broken floors and wall-plaster. These, no doubt, being due to some extent to owners being disinclined to spend money on repair of houses which bring in such low rents. Wilful damage or waste by tenants is uncommon but neglect is more frequent.

There are no unhealthy areas.

There are no byelaws.

Housing Statistics for the Year 1925.

Number of new houses erected during the year :—

(a) Total (including numbers given separately under (b).	5
Namely—1 at Abthorpe. 2 at Gayton. 2 at Cold Higham.	
(b) With State assistance under the Housing Acts :	
(i) By the Local Authority ...	Nil
(ii) By other bodies or persons ...	Nil

I.—Unfit Dwelling Houses.

Inspection—(1) Total number of dwelling-houses inspected for housing defects (under Public Health or Housing Acts)	Nil
(2) Number of dwelling-houses which were inspected and recorded under the Housing (Inspection of District) Regulations, 1910, or the Housing Consolidated Regulations, 1925.	Nil
(3) Number of dwelling-houses found to be in a state so dangerous or injurious to health as to be unfit for human habitation ...	Nil
(4) Number of dwelling-houses (exclusive of those referred to under the preceding sub-head) found not to be in all respects reasonably fit for human habitation	Nil

II.—Remedy of Defects without Service of formal Notices.

Number of defective dwelling-houses rendered fit in consequence of informal action by the Local Authority or their Officers ...	43
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III.—Action under Statutory Powers.

A.—Proceedings under section 3 of the Housing, Act, 1925.

(1) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which notices were served requiring repairs	8
(2) Number of dwelling-houses which were rendered fit after service of formal notices.	
(a) by owners	8
(b) by Local Authority in default of owners	Nil
(3) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which Closing Orders became operative in pursuance of declarations by owners of intention to close	Nil

B.—Proceedings under Public Health Acts.

(1) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which notices were served requiring defects to be remedied	15
(2) Number of dwelling-houses in which defects were remedied after service of formal notices	
(a) by owners	15
(b) by Local Authority in default of owners	Nil

C.—Proceedings under sections 11, 14 and 15 of Housing Act, 1925.

(1) Number of representations made with a view to the making of Closing Orders	Nil
(2) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which Closing Orders were made ...	Nil
(3) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which Closing Orders were determined, the dwelling-houses having been rendered fit	Nil
(4) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which Demolition Orders were made ...	Nil
(5) Number of dwelling-houses demolished in pursuance of Demolition Orders ...	Nil

INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOOD.

MILK SUPPLY. There is no reason to think this otherwise than satisfactory. Samples are not taken by this Authority, but by Officials of the County Council.

Action as to Tuberculous Milk and Cattle is taken by Inspectors under the diseases of Animals Act and no case has been reported.

There was no application for graded milk.

There was no bacteriological examination of samples of milk.

MEAT. The Sanitary Inspector visits meat premises and slaughter-houses unexpectedly. There was no application for marking under the Public Health (Meat) Regulations 1924. The disposal of Condemned Meat is effected at Towcester by burning in a furnace at the Gas Works. At the Bacon Factory at Blisworth it is put in a Digester to separate fats and the residue used for manure. In the villages it is first treated with strong disinfectant and then buried.

Butchers Shops are inspected periodically and irregularly, and hawkers vans when met with on the road.

There is no public slaughter-house.

The number of private slaughter-houses in use in the area at dates mentioned :—

	In 1920.	In January, 1925.	In December, 1925.
Registered	Nil.	Nil.	21
Licensed	Nil.	Nil.	Nil.
Total	Nil.	Nil.	21

OTHER FOODS. Unsound food is destroyed. The Inspector visits shops where fruit, vegetables, fish and other articles of food are sold. Also places where ice cream is made or sold. Bakehouses were inspected to the number of 25 and found satisfactory, and 72 visits were made to the Bacon Factory at Blisworth in the course of the year. There was no case of food poisoning so far as known.

SALE OF FOOD AND DRUGS ACT. The District Council is not an Authority under these acts.

There was no action under the Public Health (Condensed Milk) Regulations nor the Dried Milk Regulations of 1923.

PREVALENCE OF, AND CONTROL OVER, INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

The noteworthy point under this heading in the small number of cases notified, as will be seen from this table following

Infectious Diseases 1921—1925.

	1921	1922	1923	1924	1925
Diphtheria	4	5	5	3	4
Scarlet Fever	3	7	2	14	8
Enteric Fever	...	...	2	...	...
Puerperal Fever	1	...	...	...	...
Pneumonia	13	22	13	7	10
Erysipelas	1	1	1	...	1
Tuberculosis	7	5	10	12	13
Ophthalmia Neonatorum	...	1	...	...	1

There is nothing to record as to source or spread of infection. Diphtheria Anti-toxin is kept "in stock" so there is no delay in supplying it. Arrangement exists between the District Council and the Pathological Department of Northampton Hospital whereby bacteriological examinations are conducted when necessary—this facility was considerably utilized.

There is no Isolation Hospital for any disease other than Small Pox, and when infectious disease occurs in the house it is met by boarding out non-affected members of the family so far as possible.

When a case of infectious disease is notified the Sanitary surroundings of the house are inspected, disinfectants supplied, printed instructions are left, and verbal advice given, as to the procedure to be followed in the particular case. Leaflets concerning the part that house flies play in spreading disease are freely distributed.

For disinfection, the Authority have a Thresh's Emergency Disinfector, and a vehicle for taking it to the place required.

The Schick and Dick tests (for Diphtheria and Scarlet Fever respectively) are not employed so far as I know.

No Vaccination nor Re-vaccination were done by the M.O.H. under the Public Heath (Small-pox Prevention) Regulations 1917.

There was one death from Influenza in 1924—the only one since 1920.

Notifiable Diseases

(Other than Tuberculosis) during the Year 1925.

Disease		Total Cases.	Total Deaths.	Cases removed to Hospital.
Scarlet Fever	...	8	Nil.	Nil:
Diphtheria	...	4	Nil.	Nil.
Pneumonia	...	10	3	Nil.
Erysipelas	...	1	Nil.	Nil.
Ophthalmia Neonatorum		1	Nil.	Nil.

The case of Ophthalmia Neonatorum, which occured in Towcester was treated at home and recovered with unimpaired vision—only to die six months later from Pneumonia.

Tuberculosis.

New Cases and Mortality during 1925.

Age-Periods.	New Cases.				Deaths.			
	Pulmonary.		Non-Pulmonary.		Pulmonary.		Non-Pulmonary.	
	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.
0	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
1	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...
5	1	...	...	1	...	...	...	...
10	1	...	...	..	...	...	...	...
15	2	...	...	...	1	...	...	⌐...
20	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	⌐...
25	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	⌐...
35	1	2	...	...	...	...	...	...
45	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
55	2	...	...	...	1	1	...	...
65 & upwards	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...
	—	—	—	—	—	—		
Totals	8	3	1	1	3	2		

No tuberculous person was known to be employed in milking, or in any other part of the milk trade.

No proceedings were requisite under the Public Health (Prevention of Tuberculosis) Regulations, 1925, nor under Section 62 of the Public Health Act, 1925.

I am indebted to the Vaccination Officer for the information that there were during the year 73 successful vaccinations and 98 "conscientious" objections.

I am, Gentlemen,

Yours faithfully,

CHARLES SIMPSON,

Medical Officer of Health.

Towcester Rural District Council.

Summary of Sanitary Inspector's Report

for year ending December 31st, 1925

No. of Visits and Inspections made	...	...	1157
Canal Boats Inspected	...	...	45
Dairies and Cowsheds on Register	...	...	88
Workshops	„	„	37
Outworkers	„	„	18
Petrol Stores	„	„	32
Carbide	„	„	8
Slaughter-houses	„	„	21
Pail Closets converted to Water	...	...	3
Privy „ „ Pail	...	...	7
Privy to Water	...	...	1
Outfall Works cleaned out	...	...	23
Settling tanks	...	...	19
Rooms Disinfected	...	..	19
Houses	„	„	3
Bedding &c.	„	431 articles	
Food	...	T. CWT. QRS. LBS.	
Unsound Meat surrendered	1	11	2 17½
„ 2 Tins Salmon	...		
„ 1 Tin Pressed Beef	...		

Notices served—

Section 41 P.H.A. 1875	5
„ 91	9
„ 28 H. & T. P. A. 1919	8
P.H.A 1907	1
Infectious Diseases Prevention Act	5

Public Water Supplies—Satisfactory.

Dairies, Cowsheds, Factories, Workshops, and Outworkers premises have been inspected.

Slaughter-houses, Butchers Shops and Hawkers Carts and Vans exposing food for sales are inspected when met with in the district.

Towcester,
February 22nd, 1926.

TOM HARRIS,
Sanitary Inspector.

